

14 FAH-4 H-330

PROCESSING INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-20; 01-23-2015)
(Office of Origin: A/LM)

14 FAH-4 H-331 SCREENING OF INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-20; 01-23-2015)

United States Postal Service (USPS) guidelines on mail security are found in USPS Publication 166, Mail Center Security Guide, dated *January 2013*. The three chapters address biological agents (including anthrax), mail bombs and bomb threats, and mail center theft.

14 FAH-4 H-331.1 Domestic Screening of Incoming Items

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- a. Screening: *The U.S. Postal Service screens (USPS)* first-class letters up to one-half inch in thickness are screened by USPS for anthrax. *USPS irradiates all* machinable *official* letter mail addressed to Washington DC ZIP codes 202xx-205xx is irradiated by USPS.
- b. For items arriving at DPM/U from USPS, commercial transportation companies, or other *U.S.* Government agencies: At SA-32, *DPM/U* visually *inspects screens* to detect radiological, *chemical*, and biological contaminants, and *x-rays all envelopes and packages* for prohibited items and hazardous materials prior to shipment to post or delivery *to the main State Department building Harry S Truman (HST/Main State)* and Washington area annexes.
- c. For items arriving at domestic offices: The owning bureau or office *is responsible for performing appropriate*, local screening measures, in consultation with A/OPR/FMS/DESD and DS. *Typical screening incorporates the use of x-ray for threat identification along with detailed visual inspection.* Guidance for visually identifying suspicious mail is presented in 14 FAH-4 Exhibit H-331. Items *that are* suspicious should be handled in accordance with the mail room's established procedures which may include opening and inspecting the mail in a biological safety cabinet or in another controlled manner. Personal mail *delivered to the Federal workplace mailroom is considered delivered; therefore, the office staff can open it.*

14 FAH-4 H-331.2 Screening of Incoming Items at Posts Abroad

(CT:DPM-20; 01-23-2015)

- a. Mail screening is a separate and distinct task from mail sorting. Mail screening must occur in a facility outside the main building *and*, in a removable modular facility (see 14 FAH-4 H-121.1 for *the* physical requirements of a mail screening facility).
- b. Categories of items to be screened:
 - (1) Items arriving by classified diplomatic pouch do not need to be screened prior to entry into a mission building. Classified pouch shipments are *considered to be sent* from a trusted source and transported by a trusted shipper, *and* delivered on safeguarded transit;
 - (2) Items arriving by unclassified pouch are *considered to be* from a trusted source but *are* not *considered to be* transported by a trusted shipper. Therefore, they must be screened at the mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building if there is evidence of tampering of the seal or damage to the bag. In addition, posts may, on a random basis, screen a sample number of items from unclassified pouch contents;
 - (3) Mail arriving via military postal service (MPS) or diplomatic post office (DPO) has not been screened by *Department of Defense (DOD)* or the Department, and must be screened at post in a mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building. Any *Military Postal Service (MPS)* mail opened must be done under the provisions established in the DOD Postal Manual (DOD 4525.6-M); *and*
 - (4) All commercial transportation company deliveries, local deliveries, and local mail must be screened in a mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building.
- c. Mail screening procedures at posts abroad:
 - (1) Visually inspect all envelopes and packages using the guidelines in 14 FAH-4 Exhibit H-331. If post has screening equipment such as an x-ray machine, magnetometer or itemizer, post should also use this equipment to ensure the envelope/package *contains* no suspicious materials;
 - (2) If suspicious items are found during the mail screening process and post has a Class I biological safety cabinet, the items must be inspected and opened in the cabinet by personnel wearing disposable gloves. Personal mail arriving in a diplomatic pouch can be opened without the consent of the recipient; personal mail *addressed to a DPO or 20189 authorized address* arriving via USPS, MPS, DPO, or international mail cannot *be opened without the presence of the RSO and should not* be opened without the consent of the recipient;

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- (3) If suspicious items are found during the mail screening process and post does not have a Class I biological safety cabinet, the suspicious items should not be disturbed any further and *should* be immediately placed in a nearby secure location. Unless an immediate threat to life is identified, personnel present must remain in the immediate area, and only authorized response personnel may enter so that potential contamination that may be present is not spread. The mail control officer/postal officer and regional security officer must be contacted to make a decision as to whether the item can be opened at post under controlled conditions (e.g., using personal protection equipment) or if the local *hazardous materials* (hazmat) unit should be called to respond. Response personnel will make a determination as to whether or not personnel must continue to remain in the area;
- (4) *If*, after being opened in the biological safety cabinet or under controlled conditions in the mail screening facility, item is *henceforth considered* safe, it may be re-entered into the mail processing stream; *and*
- (5) *If*, after being opened in the biological safety cabinet or under controlled conditions in the mail screening facility, the item is *considered to be* contaminated, it must be left in the biological safety cabinet, *and* the biological safety cabinet *features must remain* on. The mail control officer/postal officer and regional security officer must be contacted immediately to *implement* procedures for dealing with hazardous materials. No personnel may leave the mail screening facility until decontamination procedures have been completed. See 12 FAH-1 Annex F Addendum 8 for procedures for handling suspicious powder in threat letters or containers received at post.

14 FAH-4 H-332 PICK-UP OF INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-20; 01-23-2015)

- a. A/LM/PMP/DPM acts as the agent for the Department when registered, certified, and other special category mail *when* the United States Postal Service (USPS) *delivers the mail*. If official registered and certified letters and other controlled mail addressed to offices and employees arrive at HST and annexes, it is signed for by cleared *Interoffice Mail and Messenger Service (IMMS)* staff. Addressees or their designated mail staff then *signs* for the mail items at pick-up:
 - (1) *The first method of choice is delivery verification via ILMS/MMS handheld devices. This provides a chain of custody and more accurate archiving for critical articles requiring storage of delivery records/transactions. If the USPS Form PS-3811, Return Receipt Requested, card is used, cleared IMMS staff members must accept it, complete it and return it to the sender via USPS; and*
 - (2) Department offices should establish procedures to ensure that a record of

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receipt is kept on file that identifies the customer accepting delivery.

- b. For accountable mail (i.e., USPS Certified Mail and USPS Registered Mail), the mail clerk must receive positive identification.

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14 FAH-4 Exhibit H-331

Guidance for Identifying Suspicious Envelopes/Parcels

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Items with any of the following characteristics (*see USPS Poster 84*) may indicate that the item is suspicious and should be segregated for inspection by the mail control officer/postal officer or regional security officer:

Inappropriate or unusual labeling:

- excessive postage
- handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- misspellings of common words
- strange return address or no return address
- incorrect title or name, or title without a name
- not addressed to a specific person
- missing barcodes on USPS mail
- marked with restrictions, such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do Not X-Ray"
- marked with any threatening language
- postmarked from a city or State that does not match the return address
- mailed from an unknown foreign address

Appearance:

- powdery substance felt through or appearing on the package or envelope
- oily stains, discoloration, or odor
- use of waterproof wrapping paper
- rigid, lopsided, or uneven envelope
- excessive packaging materials such as masking tape, string, etc.

Other suspicious signs:

- excessive weight
- unusual sounds from the package, such as ticking
- protruding wires or aluminum foil
- delivery of mail by unexplained means or in an unusual place